

Message Text

SECRET

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44

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-13 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02

SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 SSO-00 PRS-01

OMB-01 ACDA-07 OC-06 CCO-00 MC-02 AID-05 /099 W

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P R 071220Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2098

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USUN NEW YORK 350

USCINCEUR

COMIDEASTFOR

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 KHARTOUM 1988

DEPT PASS ASST SECRETARY SCHAUFLE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, SU

SUBJECT: CONTINUING STABILITY OF NIMEIRI REGIME

REF: KHARTOUM 1979

SUMMARY. POSSESSED OF AS MANY LIVES AS THE PROVERBIAL CAT,
NIMEIRI HAS SUCCESSFULLY WEATHERED YET ANOTHER COUP ATTEMPT
INVOLVING MEMBERS
OF THE OLD-LINE RELIGIOUS-ORIENTED UMMMA
PARTY, DISAFFECTED WESTERN SUDANESE, NUMBERS OF NON-
SUDANESE "MERCENAIRES" AND, QUITE CLEARLY THE LIBYANS.

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ARMY WAS SLOW RESPOND TO THREAT, BUT THIS PROBABLY DUE TO

VARIETY COINCIDENTAL FACTORS RATHER THAN EVIDENCE
SIGNIFICANT MILITARY DISLOYALTY. REGIME REMAINS
NARROWLY-BASED, BUT WE BELIEVE NIMEIRI CONTINUES ENJOY
ENOUGH SUPPORT FROM ARMED FORCES AND CIVILIAN ELEMENTS,
NOTABLY SOUTHERNERS, TO CONTINUE GOVERN AS EFFECTIVELY
AS IN PAST. END SUMMARY.

1. ESTABLISH SOMETHING OF A RECORD FOR SURVIVABILITY
AMONG UNSTABLE MID-EAST GOVERNMENTS, NIMEIRI HAS NOW RPT
NOW SUCCESSFULLY WEATHERED SOME FIVE COUP ATTEMPTS IN
SEVEN YEARS. THIS OFT-REPEATED DRAMA CLEARLY DEMONSTRATES
THE CONTINUING NARROW BASE OF REGIME'S POPULAR SUPPORT
BUT IT ALSO SHOWS ABSENCE OF MASSIVE POPULAR ANTIPATHY TO
NIMEIRI. AS FAR AS WE ABLE JUDGE, MAJORITY NORTHERN AND
EASTERN SUDANESE PROBABLY APATHETIC VIS-A-VIS REGIME;
WESTERNERS TO CONSIDERABLE EXTENT OPPOSED; AND SOUTHERNERS
ON BALANCE FAVORABLE. REGIME HAS BEEN CAREFUL AVOID
BLATANT CORRUPTION OF TYPE WHICH AS FED POPULAR
DISAFFECTION ELSEWHERE. MANY ORDINARY SUDANESE,
PARTICULARLY IN RURAL AREAS, ARE FLATTERED BY NIMEIRI'S
FREQUENT "WHISTLE STOP" VISITS AND FEEL THAT REGIME IS
SERIOUS ABOUT DEVELOPING COUNTRY AND IMPROVING THEIR LOT.
TRADITIONAL URBAN ELITES, ON OTHER HAND, ARE MORE LIKELY
TO BE CRITICAL OF SPECIFIC POLICIES AND BITTER AT THEIR
EXCLUSION FROM DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES. THERE WAS,
HOWEVER, NO OUT-POURING OF SUPPORT FOR REBELS ON PART
KHARTOUM POPULATION DURING EARLY STAGES COUP. ON
CONTRARY, MANY CITIZENS REPORTEDLY WERE REPELLED BY
INITIAL BRUTAL MURDERS OF PROMINENT FIGURES IN THEIR
HOMES.

2. TWO ANTITHETICAL GROUPS WHO WOULD CLEARLY LIKE TO
SEE NIMEIRI GO ARE LOCAL COMMUNISTS AND FOLLOWERS OF
EXILED ANSAR RELIGIOUS LEADER SADDIQ AL-MAHDI. COMMUNISTS
LACK NUMBERS AND POSITION ON WHICH TO BASE ANY SUCCESSFUL
COUP AND APPEAR TO HAVE INTENTIONALLY STOOD ASIDE DURING
JULY 2-3 STRUGGLE IN KHARTOUM. THE ANSAR (CONSIDERABLE
AMONG WHOM HAIL FROM WESTERN SUDAN) HAVE CLEARLY
REPRESENTED MORE SUBSTANTIAL THREAT. THEY WOULD LIKE
REVENGE FOR NIMEIRI REGIME'S POUNDING OF THEIR FORMER
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ABA ISLAND STRONGHOLD IN 1970 AND SUBSEQUENT KILLING OF
LAST IMAM. BUT FACT THAT THIS REVENGE REMAINS UNREQUITED
AFTER OVER SIX YEARS UNDERLINES THAT ANSAR NO LONGER
REPRESENT THE SIGNIFICANT POWER BASE THEY ONCE DID. AMONG
CAPTIVE REBELS SO FAR IDENTIFIED, MANY APPEAR TO BE OF
POORER CLASS WHO QUITE LIKELY, AS GOS CLAIMS,
JOINED REBEL MOVEMENT FOR GOOD PAY AND PROMISE OF EITHER
EARLY EARTHLY -- OR HEAVENLY -- REWARD.

3. ARMY REMAINS KEY TO NIMEIRI'S SURVIVAL. IT SEEMS CLEAR TROOPS RESPONDED SLOWLY TO COUP THREAT EARLY JULY 2. HOWEVER, NUMBER OF FACTORS PROBABLY ACCOUNT FOR EVIDENT LETHARGY, NOTABLY PERHAPS AT SHAGARA ARMORED CORPS CAMP, WITHOUT RESORTING TO CNSPIRACY THEORY OR ALLEGATIONS OF MAJOR MILITARY DISLOYALTY: (A) CRACK PARACHUTE BATTALION NORMALLY STATIONED NORTH KHARTOUM FOR SECURITY CAPITAL HAD JUST LEFT FOR LEBANON; (B) NUMBER KEY OPERATIONAL LEADERS (ABDUL GASSIM IBRAHIM, AHMED ABDEL HAKIM, AND ZEIN AL-ABDIN) WERE ABSENT FROM CITY; (C) RADIO AND TELEPHONE COMMUNICATIONS WERE BROKEN; (D) MILITARY STILL LACKS ADEQUATE EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS NET (PAGE COMMUNICATIONS CURRENTLY HAS CONTRACT TO REMEDY THIS DEFECT BUT WORK NOT COMPLETED); (E) MANY TROOPS NORMALLY SLEEP AT HOME AND IT WAS FRIDAY HOLIDAY; (F) MOVEMENT TO DUTY STATIONS RAPIDLY DANGEROUS IN MOST AREAS; AND (G) AS IN SEPT 1975 COUP ATTEMPT, MANY SOLDIERS APPEAR TO HAVE CHOSEN STAY OUT OF HARM'S WAY. ARMED FORCES THUS INITIALLY CAUGHT OFF BALANCE AND SOME PURGE OF OFFICER CORPS MAY WELL OCCUR AS RESULT, BUT WE CONCLUDE THAT MILITARY IN GENERAL SHOWED POSITIVE LOYALTY IN RALLYING TO NIMEIRI BY AFTERNOON JULY 2 TO BEAT BACK A WELL-PLANNED AND WELL-EXECUTED REBEL MOVE. THERE SEEMS NO BETTER TEST OF THE MILITARY'S BASIC STEADFASTNESS THAN TO NOTE SPEED WHICH OUTLYING UNITS ARRIVED KHARTOUM AND SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF CASUALTIES ARMED FORCES INCURRED IN ASSURING SURVIVABILITY OF REGIME.

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED ASST SECRETARY SCHAUFEL.

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-13 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02

SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 SSO-00 PRS-01

OMB-01 ACDA-07 OC-06 CCO-00 MC-02 AID-05 /099 W

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P R 071220Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2099

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMAVBASSY CAIRO 1199
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
USUN NEW YORK 351
USCINCEUR
COMIDEASTFOR

S E C R E T FINAL SECTION OF 2 KHARTOUM 1988

DEPT PASS ASST SECRETARY SCHAUFLE

4. QUESTIONS OF NIMEIRI'S "POPULARITY" EXCEEDINGLY
HARD TO ANSWER AND TO CONSIDERABLE EXTENT IRRELEVANT
IN NEAR EASTERN CONTEXT. IT IS CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT
HE ENJOYS CONSIDERABLE SUPPORT IN SOUTH AND AMONG
SOUTHERNERS IN THE ARMED FORCES. SOUTHERN COMMUNITY
LIVING IN OMDURMAN REPORTEDLY STARTED RIOT WITH
NEIGHBORING CHADIAN AREA WHEN RUMOR SPREAD NIMEIRI
DEAD. PALACE AREA, WHICH SERVED AS TACTICAL HEADQUARTERS
FOR NIMEIRI FORCES, IS GUARDED BY AN ALL-SOUTHERN UNIT.
WHATEVER RESIDUAL SUPPORT OLD-LINE POLITICAL FIGURES
MAY COMMAND ELSEWHERE IN SUDAN (AND WE BELIEVE THIS
TO BE SLIGHT), THEY CLEARLY REMAIN DISCREDITED IN THE
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SOUTH WHERE NIMEIRI IS STILL HAILED AS ARCHITECT OF
CIVIL WAR SETTLEMENT.

5. EVENTS OF LAST FEW DAYS PROVIDED SADAT WITH TIMELY
OPPORTUNITY PLACE ON PUBLIC RECORD EGYPTIAN DETERMINATION
SUPPORT NIMEIRI AS NECESSARY TO INSURE HIS SURVIVAL.
THIS LIKELY TO BUTTRESS NIMEIRI'S POSITION IN SHORT RUN,
PARTICULARLY OUTSIDE SUDAN, BUT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN
SERIOUS BLOW TO HIS STANDING AMONG SUDANESE HAD HIS
SURVIVABILITY BEEN SHOWN TO REQUIRE EGYPTIAN BAYONETS.
SADAT'S OPEN SUPPORT FOR NIMEIRI IS NO DOUBT ONE REASON
FOR THE CONTINUING ALL-OUT LOCAL CAMPAIGN TO STRESS THAT
RECENT ABORTIVE COUP ALMOST ENTIRELY DUE TO LIBYAN
MACHINATIONS.

6. ON BALANCE, COUNTRY TEAM CONCLUDES THAT: (A)
DESPITE REGIME'S SHORT-COMINGS AND OBVIOUS LACK OF
BROAD SUPPORT, FAILURE OF YET ANOTHER COUP INDICATES
ANEW THE UNDERLYING STRENGTH OF THE NIMEIRI REGIME

MORE THAN THE CONTRARY; (B) WITH REBEL COLLAPSE AND SEVERE RETRIBUTION LIKELY TO BE VISITED ON THEIR ASSOCIATES, THIS COULD WELL REPRESENT ANSAR LEADERSHIP'S LAST HURRAH; (C) WIDESPREAD INTERNAL APATHY TOWARD NIMEIRI COULD NOT HAVE PRODUCED RECENT COUP ATTEMPT; (D) SUBSTANTIAL OUTSIDE STIMULUS AND SUPPORT COULD HAVE, AND (E) AS INDICATED REFTTEL, LIBYANS HAVE AGAIN BEEN CAUGHT WITH THEIR HANDS IN THE COOKIE JAR. BREWER

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED ASST SECY SCHAUFEELE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL STABILITY, POLITICAL MILITARY RELATIONS, PUBLIC ATTITUDES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 JUL 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MartinML
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976KHARTO01988
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760261-0848
From: KHARTOUM
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760785/aaaacwhd.tel
Line Count: 232
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 KHARTOUM 1979
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MartinML
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <26 APR 2004 by buchant0>; APPROVED <11 AUG 2004 by MartinML>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CONTINUING STABILITY OF NIMEIRI REGIME
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, SU, (MINEIRI, JAFAR)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006